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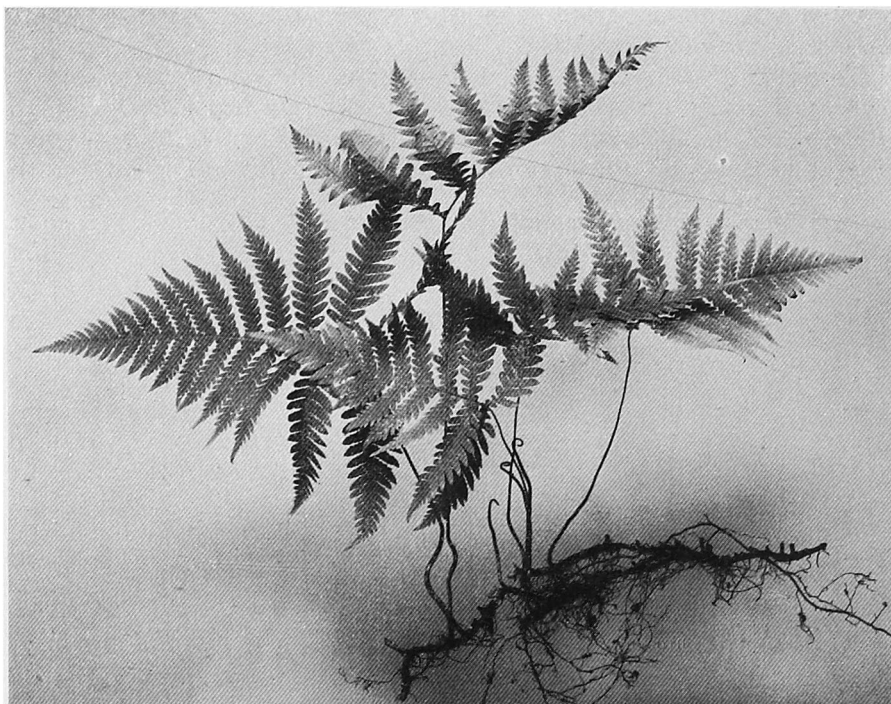
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LONG BEECH-FERN

By Henry Troth

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ARTISTIC PHOTOGRAPHY OF HENRY TROTH

Even to this day there is no small dissension as to the datum of art. Mr. Whistler's eloquent enunciation of the ultra-impressionistic doctrine continues to be the fetish of one school and the rank heresy of another. On the one hand are the nature-worshipers rallied under the banner of the Slade professor of fine arts; and on the other, the quasi-apologist for nature with Whistler as their leader and his "Ten o'Clock" lecture as their scripture and revelation.

The gulf between the two factions or cults is indeed great enough. Ruskin proclaimed nature as the acme of artistry. But Whistler found that nature merely contained "the elements of all pictures," and was "very rarely right"—"usually wrong"—and "seldom successful in producing a picture." To Whistler, the artist was and is all in all, for the artist's function it is to scan nature's treasury of suggestions, and "to pick, choose, and group with science" the elements therein contained, so that a "beautiful picture may result."

Nature, the base bullion; the artist a refiner; the resulting picture pure gold!

According to either school of thought about art, it is necessary to accord a very high rank to the camerist who is a true artist. Of all artists surely he is most hedged about with difficulties. If he elect to copy nature literally, he must perforce load his result with much



BULBOUS BUTTERCUP

By Henry Troth

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that is superfluous; and if he endeavor to "pick, choose, and group with science" a few of the many things in the angle of his *partie pris*, he is embarrassed by the greedy facility of his lens, which cannot eliminate the superfluous or subordinate the lesser object.

For the lens is an eye in which the philistinism of the Philistine is exaggerated—it sees too much, and is rated excellent in the measure of its capacity for detail, which is contrary to the standards of the artist.

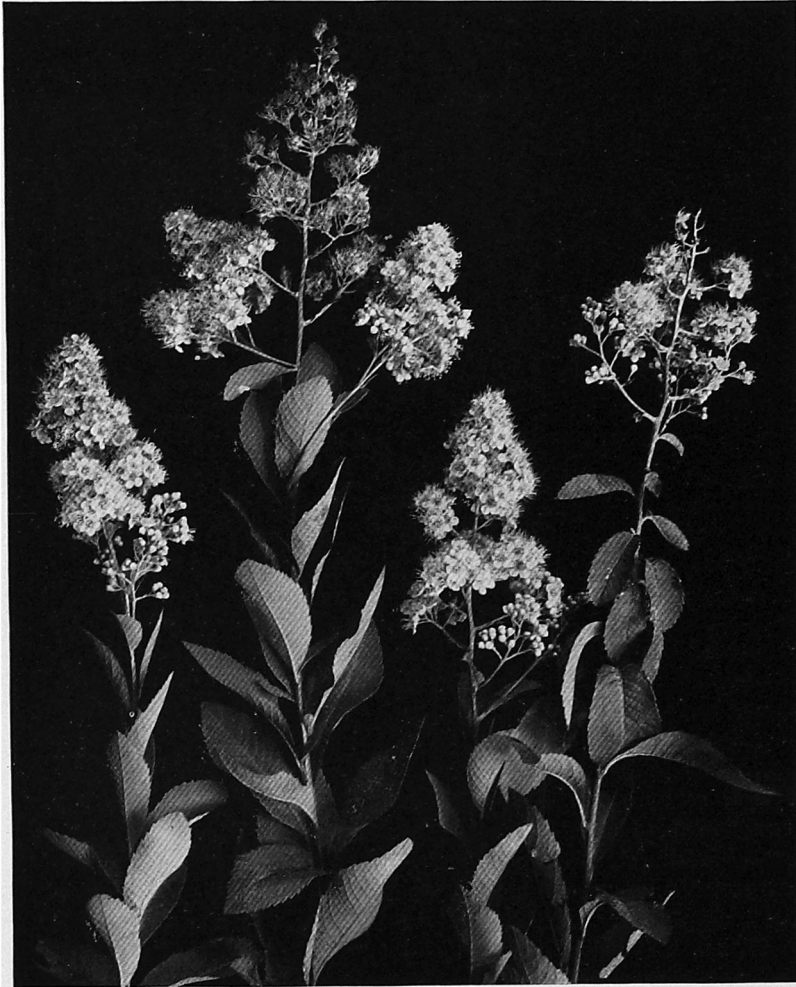
When it happens, therefore, that a camerist *does* succeed in over-

coming the deadly redundancy of his instrument—when he develops *in excelsis* the faculty of "picking, choosing, and grouping," despite the handicap of his lens—he deserves all the praise and commendation that have latterly been bestowed on Henry Troth of Philadelphia.

As we might expect of such an artist of the camera, Mr. Troth is able to reconcile in a signal way the divergencies of the Ruskin and Whistler cults of art. He draws the lily, for example, so literally that the result is a competent study for the botanist; but at the same

time he expresses in his work that divine combination of grace and strength which Whistler was pleased to term "elegant."

Mr. Troth gives us Nature *ipsissima verba* when he deems the



MEADOW SWEET

By Henry Troth

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language of literal fact to be most fitting; but he reserves always the option to interpret Nature according to his own innate feeling. He thus combines the veritistic and the impressionistic in his work, and is universally acceptable.

In looking through a collection of Mr. Troth's superb photographs,



WILD CARROT

By Henry Troth

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cular beauties under the obscuring veil of the commonplace, and he has the cunning to make the beauty dominate.

It is a mystery of his craftsmanship how he achieves such successes with material so unprepossessing. In the analysis of his qualities we may say that he has a consummate sense of pure line, of abstract mass, of tonal relations, and of all their combinations and permutations. But he has somewhat more than a mere instinct for the fundamentals of graphic art. He has pre-eminently the rare power of convey-

it readily occurs to any one that he has realized fine possibilities in scores of motives which would have escaped the notice of almost everybody else. We can fancy we see him among a thousand camera enthusiasts roving up and down the New England seacoast, and he alone of all that company pausing to record now and then this slope of sand, that majestic headland, this storm-riven tree-trunk. There is about his photographs a perfect aroma of individuality. Not one of them fails to proclaim his truly artistic selectivity. He discovers pe-



MOUNTAIN LAUREL

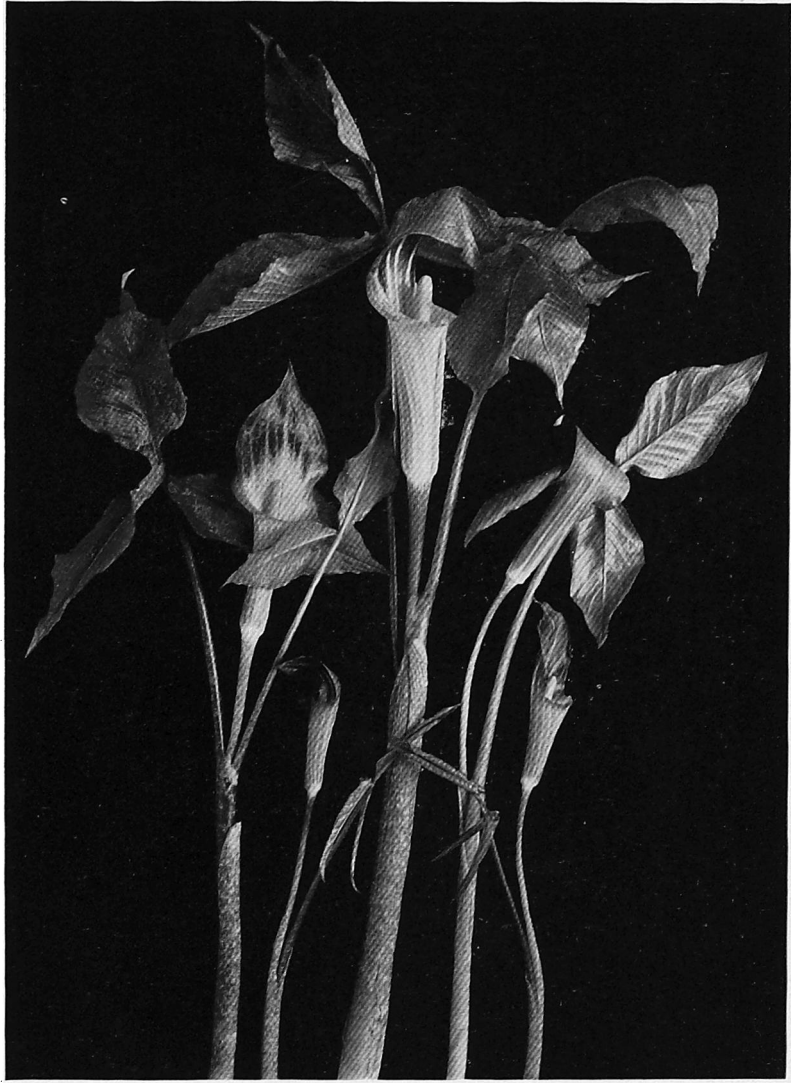
By Henry Troth

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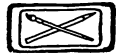


BY THE SEASIDE
By Henry Troth





JACK IN PULPIT
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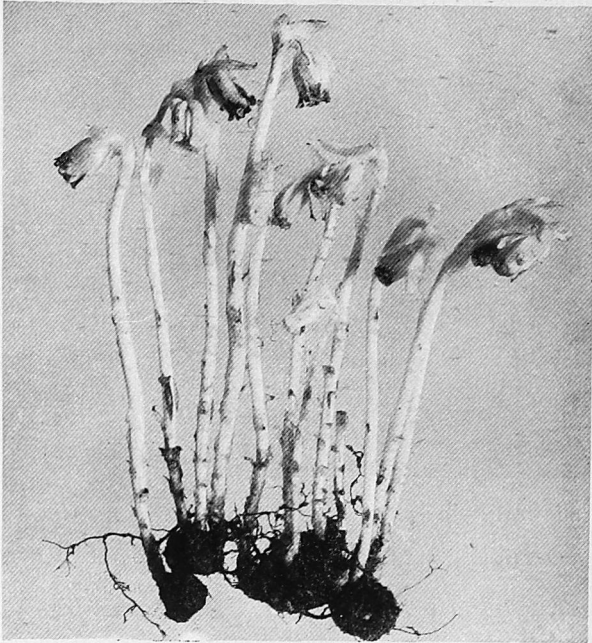
ing suggestions of his poetic moods.

By varying an exposure a fraction of a second and prolonging development a minute or two, he somehow weaves a web of fancy over his negative, and makes the cold platinotype glow with the emotion which sprung up in his heart when he chose his subject. His prize-winning "Sheepfold" picture, recently reproduced in *BRUSH AND PENCIL*, is a noteworthy example of this faculty. He exhibits it in any number of landscapes and seascapes made on the bleak Massachusetts coast.

Moreover, he has a somewhat Japanese sense of the decorative disposition of simple masses and spaces.



CHICORY
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INDIAN PIPES
By Henry Troth
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Many of his photographs have *in petto* the quality of mural painting—largeness, breadth, and masterly simplicity. It occurs to some of his admirers that this is his prime forte. No one can study his landscapes without feeling this mural quality. They are fine in ensemble and sufficient in detail.

Mr. Troth's floral delineations are almost uniformly happy in combining the literal

and the ideal in just proportion. It is difficult to deal in microscopical minutiae without falling into the habit of mincing. In handling flower subjects he enlists his decorative faculty, and makes it the foil of his botanical penchant. The fortunate result is, that his pictures are as accurate as leaves from an herbarium, and as pleasing as a cherry-blossom spray by Hokusai—science and art in one.

Finally, he has the manipulative part of his art developed to a degree of perfection which admits of no superior. This is not least of the considerations which prompted his unanimous selection for the jury of the Chicago Photographic Salon of 1901. His presence on the jury of selection vouchsafes the maintenance of high standards, both artistic and technical.

LOUIS ALBERT LAMB.



RATTLESNAKE PLANTAIN

By Henry Troth

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